

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 NEAE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00
CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SY-05 MCT-01 SCS-03 SCA-01
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FM AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0566
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

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CAIRO ALSO FOR RSO

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINS, EG
SUBJECT: MOBS PROTESTING HIGHER PRICES

REF: ALEXANDRIA 0055

1. BY MIDDAY SEVERAL ISOLATED MOBS RANGING FROM ONE TO FIVE THOUSAND WERE MARCHING, WITH NO OBVIOUS GOALS, IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THE CITY. POLICE BLOCKED OFF AVENUE HORREYA, ONE WAY MAIN ARTERY DOWNTOWN, AT INTERSECTION ONE HUNDRED YARDS EAST OF CONGEN, DIVERTING INBOUND TRAFFIC TOWARDS HARBORSIDE CORNICHE. AT ABOUT ONE O'CLOCK MOB, IN SEVERAL GROUPS TOTALLING LESS THAN A THOUSAND, PASSED CONGEN AND PROCEEDED UP HORREYA.

2. WE BELIEVE PURPOSE WAS TO JOIN STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS AT ENGINEERING FACULTY. AMERICAN PROFESSOR THERE ESTIMATED 10,000 IN FINAL MOB. WHEN CONSUL GENERAL SAW THEM AN HOUR LATER, DRIFTING BACK TOWARDS CITY CENTER, NUMBERS ONLY A FEW THOUSAND AND MOOD SEEMED MORE CARNIVAL THAN SAVAGE. SEVERAL YOUTHS HAD STICKS WITH WHICH THEY BANGED A FEW CARS.

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3. LARGEST CROWD SEEN BY CONGEN (ASIDE FROM MORNING MOB IN ATTARINE) WAS PROBABLY SAME AS SEEN HOUR EARLIER NEAR SAAD ZAGLOUL (REFTEL), SOME FIVE THOUSAND HEADING OUT BOULEVARD ALEXANDER THE GREAT SOON AFTER NOON. THIS CROWD MAY HAVE BEEN UGLIEST, ALSO, AS LOCAL DOCTOR WITH CLOSE AMERICAN CONNECTIONS SAYS THAT RAMLEH SQUARE AREA (WHICH INCLUDES SAAD ZAGLOUL)

IS LITTERED WITH GLASS. MOBS THERE SMASHED CAR, BUS AND SHOP WINDOWS. ALL POLICE HAD FLED SCENE.

4. ELSEWHERE IN CITY (HORREYA AT SIDI GABR STATION NEAR UPPER CLASS RESIDENTIAL AREA, IN ADDITION TO PREVIOUSLY NAMED SITES) POLICE ARE MERELY DIVERTING TRAFFIC FROM WHERE MOBS ROAM. NO RPT NO EFFORT SEEN TO TURN BACK OR DISPERSE THEM.

5. IDENTIFIABLE CHANTS HAVE BEEN "DOWN WITH MAMDOUH SALEM" AND "DOWN WITH WESTERN COUNTRIES". NO RPT NO DELIBERATELY ANTI-AMERICAN CRIES HEARD. LARGE SOFTBOARD PROPAGANDA PICTURE OF SADAT AT PARK ONE BLOCK FROM CONGEN WAS BROKEN DOWN AND TORN TO SHREDS. SOME SOURCES CLAIM TO HAVE HEARD "DOWN WITH SADAT" CRIES.

6. ONE LOCAL SOURCE TOOK THREE HOURS GETTING TO RAMLEH SQUARE AREA THROUGH KANTARA SECTION (MAMDOUH SALEM'S ELECTORAL DISTRICT) BECAUSE OF TRAFFIC TANGLE MOBS WERE CAUSING THERE AS EARLY AS NINE THIS MORNING.

7. DOWNTOWN SHOPS ARE SHUTTERED OR HAVE SHUTTERS AT "HALF MAST". SHOPS ELSEWHERE OPEN AND BUSINESS GOING ON AS USUAL.

8. COMMENT - SURPRISE NOTIFICATION AND MAGNITUDE OF SOME PRICE INCREASES ARE MAIN IRRITANTS. MOBS MOSTLY PEACEFUL AND WITH LITTLE ORGANIZATION OR LEADERSHIP. GENERAL FEELING, HOWEVER, IS WE WILL SEE BIGGER, BETTER ORGANIZED AND PROBABLY MORE DANGEROUS DEMONSTRATIONS IN NEXT FEW DAYS.

CHASE

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